

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR,, UR, UN, PARM
SUBJECT: GROMYKO'S 31ST UNGA SPEECH

REF: (A) USUN 4008, (B) MOSCOW 15034, (C) MOSCOW 10438,
(D) 75 MOSCOW 14464, (F) 75 MOSCOW 13670

1. SUMMARY. MAIN FEATURES OF GROMYKO'S SEPT 28 SPEECH AT
UNGA, AS SEEN FROM HERE, ARE STANDARD, EVEN PEDESTRIAN,
FIDELITY TO MAIN LINES OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY OVER PAST
YEAR. NOVELITES -- ON VERIFICATION, WORLD NON-USE)OF-FORCE
TREATY, SPECIAL SESSION/WDC LINK AND ESPECIALLY INDIAN OCEAN--
ARE FEW, AND REACTIVE TO REQUIREMENTS OF SOVIET
UNGA DISARMAMENT STRESS, ON ONE HAND, AND INDIANS, ON THE
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OTHER. SHIFTS IN EMPHASIS--PLACING DISARMAMENT ALMOST

ENTIRELY IN DEFENSIVE CONTEXT OF STOPPING THE ARMS RACE, LESS STRESS ON THE U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONSHIP COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, AND HIGH-LEVEL RATIFICATION OF SOVIET MEDIA CONCERN AT ARMS ACTIVITIES IN PERSIAN GULF-- ESSENTIALLY UPDATE STANDARD SOVIET STANCE. SPEECH THEREFORE ACCURATELY REFLECTS SOVIET CONCERNS OVER ARMS RACE, STATE OF DETENTE, MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, BUT IN ESSENCE, LIKE BREZHNEV BEFORE HIM, GROMYKO WAS STANDING PAT. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPARTMENT WILL BE IN BEST POSITION TO WEIGH GROMYKO'S UNGA SPEECH 28 IN LIGHT OF HIS APPROACH TO HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS WITH US, BUT FOLLOWING FEATURES STRUCK US HERE.

3. COMPARED WITH THE OTHER COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENTS ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY OVER THE PAST YEAR--GROMYKO'S SPEECH TO THE 30TH UNGA AND HIS KOMMUNIST ARTICLE A MONTH LATER, AND BREZHNEV'S REPORT AT THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY AND SPEECH AT BERLIN IN JUNE (REFTELS C-F), GROMYKO'S EFFORT IS STANDARD, AND EVEN PEDESTRIAN. IT IS SHORT ON NOVELTY; ITS SHIFTS OF EMPHASIS WERE UNSURPRISING; AND IT SHOWS THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN A FOREIGN POLICY HOLDING PATTERN.

4. THE KEY NOVELTIES, AS WE SEE THEM, CONCERN VERIFICATION, SUBMISSION OF THE WORLD NON-USE-OF-FORCE (NUF) TEXT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN WORKING ON AS A TREATY DRAFT, LINKING SUPPORT FOR A UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT TO THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (WDC) PROPOSAL, AND ESPECIALLY THE INDIAN OCEAN. ON THE LATTER, MOVEMENT TO SUPPORT THE ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL CONTINUES A DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN VISIBLE SINCE MRS. GANDHI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IN JUNE, BUT THE ASSENT TO DISCUSSIONS OF LIMITATIONS ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES, GOING BEYOND BASES, SEEMS TO US A GENUINELY NEW MOVE FROM THE SOVIETS. OUR (UNCONFIRMED) SUSPICION IS THAT IT FORMED THE CORE OF GROMYKO'S TALKS SEPT 3 WITH INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN (REF 15034) ON "UNGA MATTERS-
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5. SUCH NOVELTIES ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, HOWEVER. BASICALLY, THE SPEECH READS LIKE AN UPDATE OF BREZHNEV'S AT THE CONGRESS AND BERLIN, TO REFLECT CONCERNS WHICH HAVE SURFACED SINCE THEN. THE KEY AREAS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

--THE CONCERN OVER THE "ARMS RACE" IS ABSOLUTELY

FRONT AND CENTER. AS WE POINTED OUT IN MOSCOW 10438, BREZHNEV'S BERLIN SPEECH GAVE IT HIGH-LEVEL RATIFICATION. NOW, IN GROMYKO'S SPEECH, THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET UNGA STRESS ON DISARMAMENT REAPPEARS IN THE GARB OF AN EFFORT TO STOP THE ARMS RACE (RATHER THAT AS MORE OF THE SAME, OR AN AID AND UNDERPINNING FOR DETENTE).

--PERHAPS CONCOMMITANTLY, THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IS NO LONGER THE CENTERPIECE OF THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY PICTURE, AS IT WAS LAST YEAR (75 MOSCOW 13670). IT IS STILL IMPORTANT, EVEN TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT IN KEY AREAS, BUT IT IS TOUCHED ON LESS FREQUENTLY AND, ABOVE ALL, IT DROPS BEHIND EUROPE IN THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF GROMYKO'S PRESENTATION, AND THE SPEECH IS LARDED, THERE AND EARLIER, WITH RESENTMENT AT "STATE ACTIVISTS" WHO BLOW HOT AND COLD ON SUCH FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS AS DETENTE, IN CONTRAST TO THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH IS "NOT GUIDED BY CONJUNCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS" IN DEALING WITH THE U.S.

--FINALLY, AT LEAST AS WE READ IT, THE RECENT SOVIET MEDIA CONCERN OVER THE ARMS BUILDUP IN THE PERSIAN GULF RECEIVES TOP-LEVEL REGISTRATION IN GROMYKO'S LANGUAGE ABOUT MILITARY PREPARATIONS IN "REGIONS ON THE SOVIET UNION'S SOUTHERN FRONTIERS." THIS COULD REFER TO CHINA, AS USUN 4008 POINTS OUT, BUT FOR THE SOVIETS IRAN IS PART OF ASIA TOO, AND WE STRONGLY SUSPECT GROMYKO HAD THE GULF, RATHER THAN THE SINO-SOVIET FRONTIER, IN MIND.

--CHINA SECTION APPEARS TO US TO BE RIGIDLY STANDARD--THE VIRTUES OF NORMALIZATION PLUS LACONIC REFERENCE TO BREZHNEV'S RATHER TOUGH 25TH CONGRESS
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REPORT LANGUAGE--AS IS NATURAL, GIVEN THE EXTREME CARE THE SOVIETS CAN BE EXPECTED TO DEMONSTRATE IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-MAO PERIOD.

6. ON BALANCE, THEN, GROMYKO ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE SOVIET UNION'S CURRENT APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY--CONCERN OVER THE ARMS RACE, THAT STATE OF DETENTE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA--BUT GIVES NO SIGN OF A CREATIVE IMPLUSE, NOR ANY SIGNAL OF NEW POLICY PATHS AIMING AT BREAKTHROUGH. THE NOVELTIES ARE, ALMOST CERTAINLY, ESSENTIALLY REACTIVE: IN THE ARMS CONTROL FIELD THE SOVIETS WISH TO "KEEP THE INITIATIVE," ESPECIALLY IN THE UN CONTEXT WHERE THEY WANT ARMS CONTROL TO BE THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION; AND IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, THEY WISH TO DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIVENESS TO

THEIR MAJOR AREA PARTNER, INDIA. BUT OVERALL, DESPITE
THE GREATER DETAIL NORMAL IN A UNGA SPEECH BY A
FOREIGN MINISTER, GROMYKO TOOK HIS CUE FROM BREZHNEV
AT THE CONGRESS AND BERLIN, AND STOOD PAT.
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